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Drink Deeply from the Divine Fountain

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Abstract: This article encourages Church members to read the Book of Mormon because the book will fill the reader's mind with "the waters of life," remind him/her of spiritual truths, bring great blessings into the home, cause children and parents to respect one another, and arm the reader against the faulty teachings of the world.

I know that God lives. I bear personal testimony to the divinity of the mission of the Savior, and that this is his work, and that President David O. McKay is his true representative here upon this earth in our day, and I do it humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



DRINK DEEPLY FROM THE DIVINE FOUNTAIN

*Marion G. Romney
of the Council of the Twelve*

My beloved brethren and sisters, I bear witness to the truth of all that Brother Lee has just said. As he talked, I was reminded that my grandfather, Miles Romney, heard the first missionaries, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, and Willard Richards, preach on the streets in Preston, England, in 1837. He heard them on Market Square; he followed them to the Cockpit where they did much of their preaching in those early days. He joined the Church early in 1838, emigrated to Nauvoo in 1842, and now has about 2500 descendants in the Church.

I am tempted, in a way, to comment on my missionary labors of recent months, but will refrain from doing so for fear I might miss some of them. In the last twenty-six months I have toured, for which I am very grateful President McKay, fifteen missions, fourteen of them beyond the borders of the United States, eleven of them foreign-speaking missions. Last October conference time I was in Vienna. Last week I was in Sydney, Australia. I testify to you that the spirit is on the move in every one of the fifteen missions which I visited.

One thing I can say about them all is that in every one of them I heard fervent testimony to the mighty power of the Book of Mormon in bringing souls unto Christ. In my view, the Book of

Mormon is the most effective piece of missionary literature we have.

I invite you to pray with me for a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for I would like to stimulate you to resolve to read the Book of Mormon. As I speak, I shall have in mind particularly this fine group of young men and women who are singing for us and all others of their generation.

There are many reasons why we should read the Book of Mormon. To begin with, the Lord has put us under obligation to do so. He said that he sent Moroni to reveal it (D&C 27:5) and that through his mercy he had given the Prophet Joseph "power from on high . . . to translate [it]" (see *ibid.*, 1:29; 20:8); that it contains ". . . the truth and the word of God—" and "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also." (*Ibid.*, 19:26; 20:9.)

Nephi tells us that its contents ". . . shall go from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand; . . . and the nations who shall possess them shall be judged of them according to the words which are written." (2 Nephi 25:22.)

For me there could be no more compelling reason for reading the Book of Mormon than this statement of the Lord that we shall be judged by what is written in it.

Moroni says that the very reason the book has been given to us is that we may know the "decrees of God" set forth therein and by obedience to them escape the calamities which are to follow disobedience. (Ether 2:11.)

To the early Saints, the Lord spoke rather sharply about remembering the Book of Mormon. "Your minds in times past," he said to them, "have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, . . ." (D&C 84:54-57.) Prior to this he had already told them that "the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction." (*Ibid.*, 33:16.) On another occasion he had said, ". . . the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 42:12.)

It is of course obvious that unless we read, study, and learn the principles which are in the Book of Mormon, we, the elders, priests, and teachers of "this church," cannot comply with this direction to teach them.

But there is another reason why we should read it: By doing so we will fill and refresh our minds with a constant

flow of that "water" which Jesus said would be in us ". . . a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14.) We must obtain a continuing supply of this water if we are to resist evil and retain the blessings of being born again, as we were counseled to do by President McKay.

The great over-all struggle in the world today is, as it has always been, for the souls of men. Every soul is personally engaged in the struggle, and he makes the fight with what is in his mind. In the final analysis the battleground is, for each individual, within himself. Inevitably he gravitates towards the subjects of his thoughts. Ages ago the wise man thus succinctly put this great truth: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he": (Proverbs 23:7.)

If we would escape the lusts of the flesh and build for ourselves and for our children great and noble characters, we must keep in our minds and in their minds true and righteous principles for our thoughts and their thoughts to dwell upon.

We must not permit our minds to become surfeited with the interests, things, and practices of the world about us. To do so is tantamount to adopting and going along with them, for the experience of the race sustains the conclusion of him who said that

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, and then
embrace."

(Pope, *Essay on Man*,
epistle 11, line 217.)

If we would avoid adopting the evils of the world, we must pursue a course which will daily feed our minds with and call them back to the things of the spirit. I know of no better way to do this than by reading the Book of Mormon.

In all dispensations the Lord has counseled his people to keep in their minds and thoughts the truths he has revealed to them. To the early Saints of this dispensation he said: ". . . let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds." (D&C 43:34.) This counsel followed his statement to the elders: ". . . Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit; And ye are to be taught from on high. . . ." (*Ibid.*, 43:15, 16.)

Instructing ancient Israel not to go after ". . . the gods of the people which [were] round about" you (Deut. 6:14), he said:

"Hear, O Israel: . . .

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house,

and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

"And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (*Ibid.*, 6:4, 6-9.)

"Search the scriptures," (John 5:39) said Jesus to his carping critics, who, being surfeited with the things of this world, rejected him. In the scriptures they could, if they would, learn the truth about him and the things of eternal life which he taught them.

The Psalmist thus recounts the rewards which follow knowing and meditating upon the word of God:

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

"Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: . . .

"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

"I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

"I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

"I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:97-105.)

I am persuaded, my brethren and sisters, that it is irrational to hope to escape the lusts of the world without substituting for them as the subjects of our thoughts the things of the spirit, and I know that the things of the spirit are taught with mighty power in the Book of Mormon. I believe with all my heart, for example, that if our young people could come out of our homes thoroughly acquainted with the life of Nephi, imbued with the spirit of his courage and love of truth, they would choose the right when a choice is placed before them.

How marvelous it would be if, when they must make a decision, there would flash into their minds, from long and intimate association with them, the words of Nephi: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them." (1 Nephi 3:7.)

And if, when the going gets rough and temptation to abandon the course of righteousness presses upon them, they would think of his plea to his wayward brothers: ". . . let us be faithful in keep-

ing the commandments of the Lord for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?" (*Ibid.*, 3:15 4:1.)

If our young folks are traditioned in the teachings of the Book of Mormon, they will not only be inspired with righteous courage to choose the right by the example of Nephi, the "two thousand sons of Helaman," and other great characters of the book, they will also be so schooled in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they will know what is right.

From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Redeemer and Savior. This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm. In the Book of Mormon, they will find the plainest explanation of Christ's divine mission and atonement to be found anywhere in sacred writ.

They will be familiar with the great fundamental basic virtues; the Book of Mormon is full of instructions concerning them. They will have learned that ". . . to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39), that the Lord God delights in chastity and virtue which are ". . . most dear and precious above all things, . . ." (Jacob 2:28, Moroni 9:9.) They will know that a violation of this sacred principle is, in the sight of the Lord, an ". . . abomination . . . above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost." (Alma 39:5.)

They will have learned the folly of putting their trust in the learning of men or in the riches of this world (2 Nephi 9:28-30.) As a matter of fact, there is no fundamental virtue about which they will not be taught, for in the Book of Mormon, as has already been said, is to be found "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ." (D&C 19:26; 20:9.)

And so, I counsel you, my beloved brothers and sisters and friends everywhere, to make reading in the Book of Mormon a few minutes each day a life-long practice. All of us need continuing close contact with the Spirit of the Lord. We need to take the Holy Spirit for our guide that we be not deceived. I am persuaded by my own experience and that of my loved ones, as well as by the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that one can get and keep closer to the Lord by reading the Book of Mormon than by reading any other book. Don't be content with what someone else says about what is in it. Drink deeply from the divine fountain itself.

I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who

dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase, mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to that counsel. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness.

That we will seek these blessings through reading the Book of Mormon, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.



A MARVELOUS WORK

John Longden

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

"Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.

"Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

"Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;

"For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;

"And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.

"Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.

"Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Amen." (D&C 4.)

This is one of my favorite scriptures.